

# Performing an Oral Cancer Examination

# Oral or Pharyngeal Cancer Incidence and Survival

- 30,000 Americans will be diagnosed this year
- Only half will survive more than five years.
- Approximately 8,000 deaths will occur this year

# Early Detection Saves Lives

- Early detection and timely treatment could dramatically reduce deaths.
- Five-year survival rates:
  - Localized disease at diagnosis – 76%
  - Metastasized disease – 19%
- Early detection of oral cancer is often possible
- Tissue changes in the mouth can be seen and felt easily

# Warning Signs

- Possible precursors to cancer:
  - Leukoplakia (white lesions)
  - Erythroplakia (red lesions)
    - Less common than leukoplakia
    - Greater potential for becoming cancerous
- No resolution after two weeks:
  - Reevaluate
  - Consider biopsy

# Other Possible Signs and Symptoms

- A lump or thickening in the oral soft tissues
- Soreness or a feeling that something is caught in the throat
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- Ear pain
- Difficulty moving the jaw or tongue
- Hoarseness
- Numbness of the tongue or other areas of the mouth
- Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable

# Other Possible Signs and Symptoms

- If these problems persist for more than two weeks:
  - Thorough clinical examination
  - Laboratory tests, as necessary (biopsy)
- If a definitive diagnosis cannot be obtained, referral to the appropriate specialist is indicated

# Risk Factors

- Tobacco/Alcohol Use: Tobacco and excessive alcohol use increases the risk of oral cancer
  - Using both tobacco and alcohol poses a much greater risk than using either substance alone
- Sunlight: Risk factor for lip cancer
- STDs: HPV type 16

# Risk Factors

- Age: Incidence increases steadily
  - Peaks in persons aged 65-74
  - For African Americans, incidence peaks about 10 years earlier
- Gender: 2:1 (men:women)
- Race: More frequent in African Americans
- Nutrition: Vitamins A, C & E, carotene, and Iron

# Examination Overview

- Take a history of alcohol and tobacco use
- Thorough head and neck examination at each dental visit and general medical examination
  - Esp. those who use tobacco or excessive alcohol
- Use the head and neck exam illustrated in this program
- Follow up any possible signs or symptoms of oral cancer

# Tools and Time

- Exam abstracted from WHO standardized oral examination method
- Consistent with CDC and NIH method
- Requirements:
  - Adequate lighting
  - Dental mouth mirror
  - Two 2" x 2" gauze squares
  - Gloves
  - Seated patient
  - Removal of intraoral prostheses
- Should take no longer than 5 minutes

# Extraoral Examination

## Face



# Perioral and Intraoral Soft Tissue Examination - Lips



# Perioral and Intraoral Soft Tissue Examination – Labial Mucosa



# Perioral and Intraoral Soft Tissue Examination – Labial Mucosa



# Buccal Mucosa



# Buccal Mucosa



# Gingiva



# Tongue Dorsum



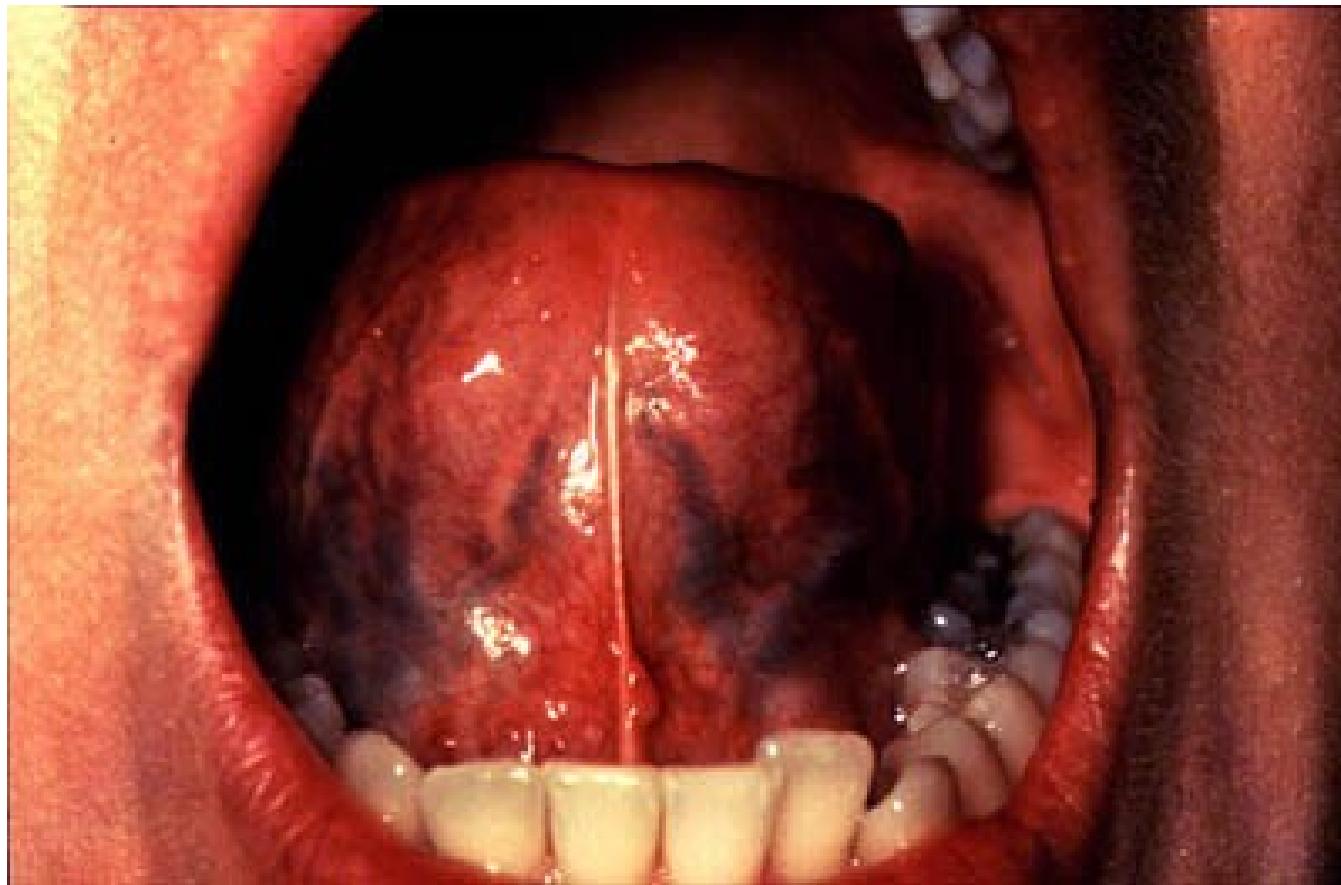
# Tongue Left Margin



# Tongue Right Margin



# Tongue Ventral



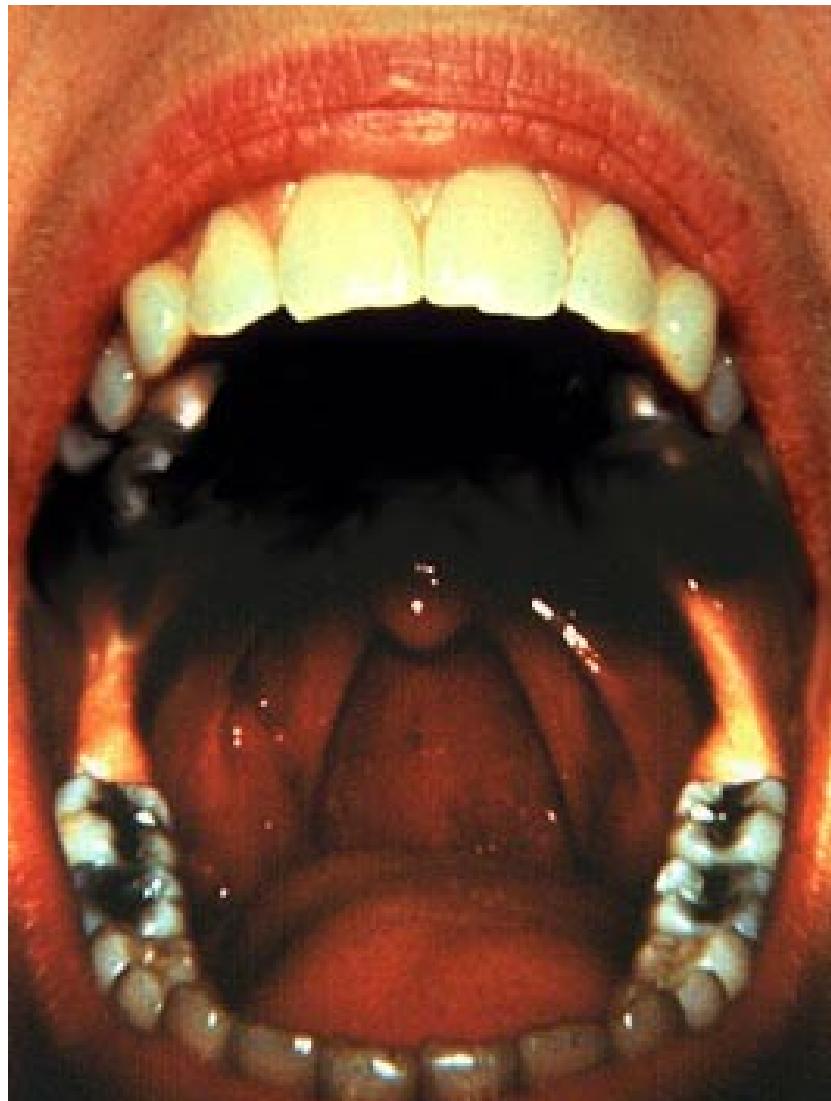
# Floor



# Hard Palate



# Oropharynx

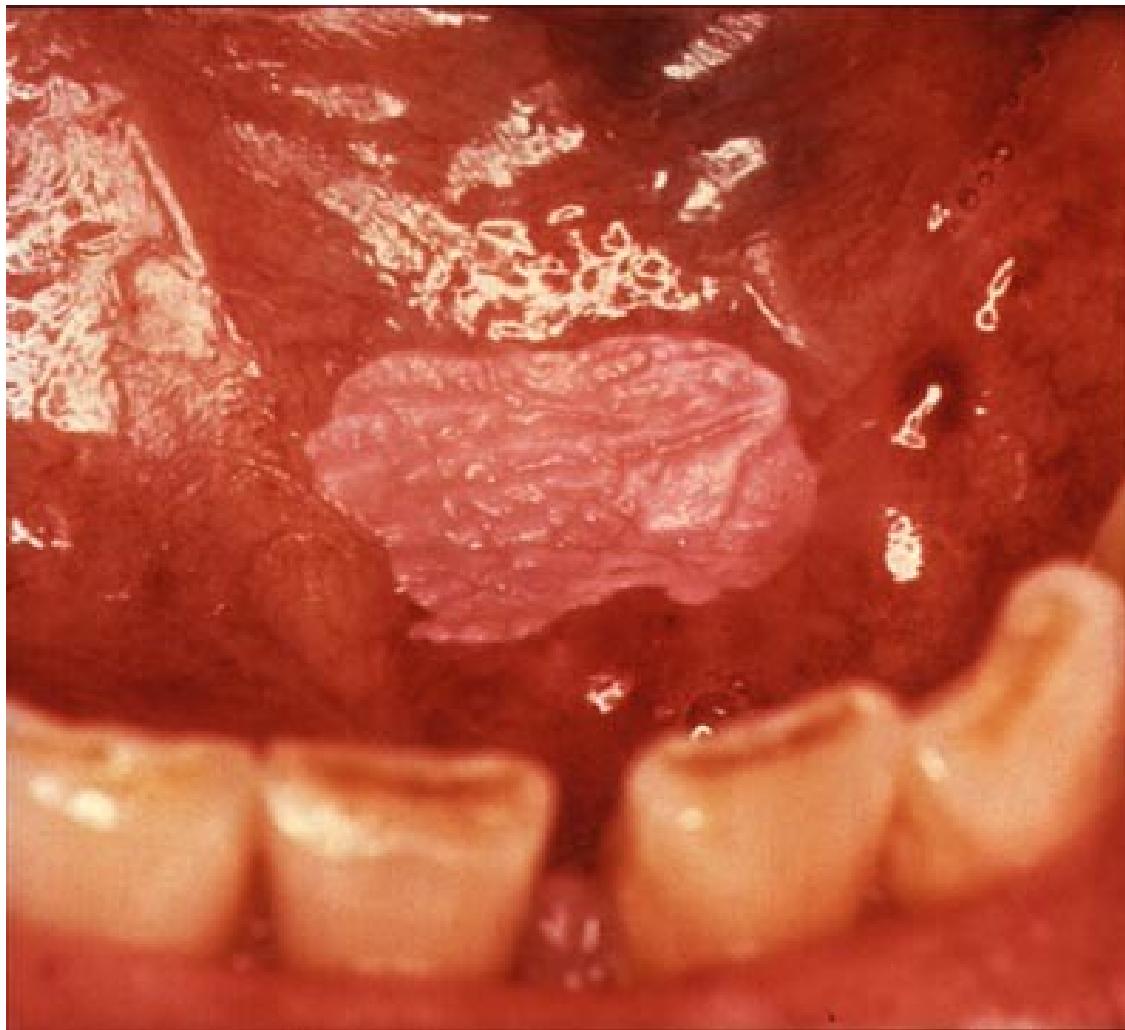


A close-up photograph of a dental patient's mouth. The patient is wearing a dental bib. A dental professional's hands are visible, wearing white gloves, as they perform a procedure. The patient's teeth and tongue are visible.

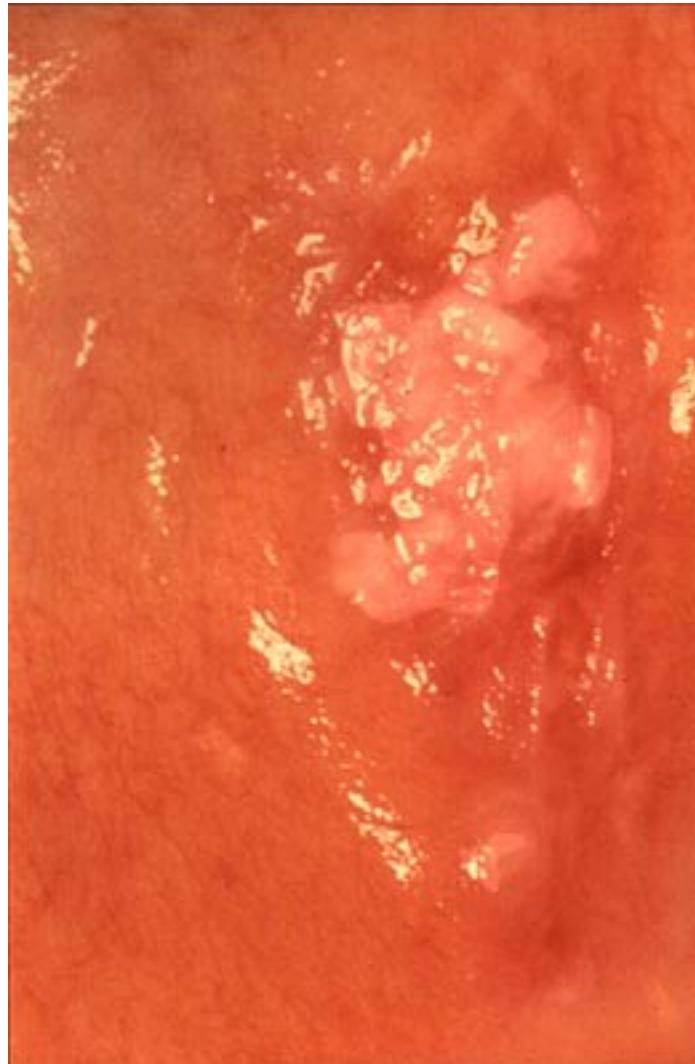
# Palpation

# Examples of Oral Lesions Suspicious for Oral Cancer

# Homogenous Leukoplakia



# Leukoplakia with Early Squamous Cell Carcinoma



# Nodular Leukoplakia with Severe Epithelial Dysplasia



# Erythroleukoplakia with Candida Infection



# References

Information and illustrations obtained from the National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse (NOHIC) materials

*Detecting Oral Cancer: A Guide for Health Care*

*Professionals*, which was developed by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. The program is not copyrighted and may be reproduced.

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DiseasesAndConditions/OralCancer/DetectingOralCancer.htm>

Additional information was obtained from the ORAL CANCER BACKGROUND PAPERS, Prepared for the National Strategic Planning Conference for the Prevention and Control of Oral and Pharyngeal Cancer, August 7-9, 1996, Chicago, Illinois.

<http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/conferences/oc-bgpapers.htm>

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